

## **“Charting the Landscape/Mapping New Paths”: Project Descriptions**

1. **Project Name:** School Library Advocacy for Administrators
2. **Goal:** to educate principals and other school administrators about the potential of using a school library program to improve students’ academic success; educating them on the research, roles of the librarian, information literacy curriculum, and how to create, sustain, and evaluate quality school library programs
3. **Participating institutions/agencies:** Mansfield University of Pennsylvania and IMLS (One of the criteria for being awarded an IMLS-funded scholarship in Mansfield’s School Library & Info. Technologies graduate school is to recruit a local principal to take this summer, 4-week, online program.)
4. **Your role/expertise in this type project:** I developed the program in eCollege courseware and facilitate the program. The program is now being offered as a one-graduate credit course each summer.
5. **Outcomes / successes to-date:** 12 principals completed the course in July 2003 and 9 are in the final stages of completing the Summer 2004 session. Almost all who completed the program rated the content “extremely important” to their role as a building leader. (All others rated it as “important.”) Many principals have used the \$500 to implement an information literacy curriculum involving collaboration among librarians and teachers. The results of the pre-surveys and post-surveys verify that principals learn very little about school library programs in their preparations to become a school administrator.
6. **Lessons learned :**
  - In order to have a quality school library program, it is essential to have a certified library media specialist and the support and understanding of the building-level administrator.
  - Even though principals earned \$500 to be used to improve their local school libraries, the incentive needs to be increased to insure that more complete the program.
  - Principals said they learned, but did not understand prior to the program:
    - The school librarian’s role of instructional partner
    - Benefits of instructional collaboration in improving instruction
    - The research correlating quality school libraries to the academic success of students
    - Connection between information literacy curriculum & state standards

7. **If we began anew we would ask these questions at the beginning:**
- When is a better time for principals to take the 4-week program?
  - What other means can we utilize to ensure that more principals complete the program? How can we increase their “ownership” in creating quality school library programs?
  - How can we take this program to a larger group of school administrators?
8. **Critical success factors:**
- Scholarship students recruited the principals so we had principals from 7 states reflecting a diversity of school settings.
  - Monetary incentives for principals to enroll and complete the course
  - New ways to recruit/enroll more principals
9. **Our next steps will be:**
- We have found a researcher who is doing follow-up phone interviews with the principals who completed last year to learn if they implemented their action plan to improve their local school library and what changes have occurred as a result of the principal’s new vision of the school library. The research will be presented and published.
  - We are seeking new/additional grants to expand the program, possibly offering the program in selected states working with the state’s department of education .
  - We will be advertising the program as a one-graduate credit course in targeted administrator publications.
10. **What else?**
- Scholarship information and a description of the school library advocacy course, including a syllabus, can be found on the web at <http://libweb.mansfield.edu/reap/>.
- With IMLS funding, we will be able to support the \$500 incentive plus \$150 worth of books and materials that each principal receives for two more summers (2005 and 2006).

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**Related articles about Mansfield University's online school library graduate program and the summer school library advocacy course for principals:**

Glick, Andrea. "The First All-Virtual Library School." School Library Journal Apr. 2002:54-56.

Kachel, Debra E. "Partner for Success: A School Library Advocacy Training Program for Principals." Knowledge Quest Nov./Dec. 2003: 17-19.